

ALCESTIS

Prompt Book -

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*The Gift of*  
*Mrs G. F. Hall*



Ms. A. 1. 1. 1. 1.

Henry Welby Esq<sup>re</sup>  
Queen's Royal Theatre  
ALCESTIS, Dublin

THE ORIGINAL

STRONG-MINDED WOMAN;

A CLASSICAL BURLESQUE,

IN ONE ACT.

BEING

A MOST SHAMELESS MISINTERPRETATION OF THE  
GREEK DRAMA OF EURIPIDES.

WITH AN ORIGINAL PROLOGUE, UPON THE OCCASION OF ITS  
SUBSEQUENT REVIVAL.

BY

FRANCIS TALFOURD,

*Author of "Shylock," "Ganem, the Slave of Love," &c., &c.*

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THIRD EDITION.

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THOMAS HAILES LACY,  
WELLINGTON STREET, STRAND,  
LONDON.



Originally Performed at the Strand Theatre, July 4th, 1850.

## CHARACTERS MISREPRESENTED.

APOLLO	(the original Sir Oracle) . . . . .	MISS ADAMS.
ORCUS	{ (or Death; his first appearance in so early a stage—an infernal god, and an infernal nuisance) }	MR. H. FARREN.
HERCULES	{ (a hero whose address was well known at his club) }	MR. W. FARREN.
ADMETUS	{ (an individual weak in intel- lect, and not 'recommended by any Faculty') }	MR. COMPTON.
POLAX	{ (inspector of Pelisse and Petti- coats, as usual of the 'Hra division) }	MR. W. SHALDERS.
ALCESTIS	{ (the regular Greek Play heroine, rigidly correct, and irreproachably Classical) }	MRS. L. MURRAY.
PHÆDRA	{ (servant of all work and no play; taken up by the Policeman aforesaid) }	MRS. A. PHILLIPS.
TWO CHILDREN	{ (very bad characters, as they have nothing to say for themselves) }	MISSSES SHARP AND GILBERT.

SCENE—Pherea, in Thessaly.

TIME—Old enough to know 'etter.

The PLOT, which has been thought an eligible ground plot for building one story on, is therefore mainly referable to the injured poet above mentioned, and may be thus briefly described. Admetus, being due to Death, and as such totally unprepared to take himself up, is about to betake himself down, according to previous arrangement, when Orcus, who has been meanwhile trying his mean wiles upon Alcestis, (Admetus' very much better half) expresses himself willing to receive her as a substitute; her husband, friends and relations, not feeling quite so disposed to be disposed of. Alcestis however consents, packs up her own traps, and then obligingly goes packing down those of Orcus. At this melancholy juncture, Hercules chances to be passing through Thessaly, on his return from his provincial engagements, and having a knack of turning up a trump at a rub, plays his club so judiciously as to retake the Queen, in spite of the deuce, and restores her to her family and friends.

The Scene, being the work of Mr. W. Shalders, need but be seen to be appreciated, and will be all his fancy painted it. It is hoped that the piece will be no less in drawing.

For the Costumes, Messrs. Nathan have undertaken to give all the characters a proper dressing.

The (special) Appointments which have been made by Mr. McGinn, will be strictly kept—in the Property Room; and the effect of the Music will doubtless be electrical through so able a conductor as Mr. J. Barlaid.





## OCCASIONAL PROLOGUE.


BY FRANCIS TALFOURD.

*Upon the revival of "Alcestis" November 24, 1853.*

*Spoken by MISS HARRIETT GORDON.*

"Stay—not so fast—I have a word to say  
Before the curtain rises on our play,  
And venture a few passing observations,  
Upon our scenery and decorations:  
Now, scorning with a subterfuge to sneak off,  
I'll own at once that none of these to speak of,  
Will in our simple tragedy be found—  
Remember, we are treading classic ground,  
And from the drama's strict laws do not mean  
To wander off in quest of change of scene;  
While, I may add, we've no excuse to roam,  
Since in our characters we're all at home.  
On gaudy pageants, which elsewhere prevail,  
We turn our back, as we unfold our tale,  
Wherein Greek meets Greek as in days of yore—  
So the scene behind is what it was before  
The spirited leaders of this o'er fast age  
Kicked o'er the traces of the slow old stage.  
Plays of the greatest and the least pretence  
Are mounted so regardless of expense  
That fifty nights is scarce a run accounted—  
Run! they should gallop, being so well *mounted*!  
In such fine feathers managers now show them,  
The authors of their being wouldn't know them!  
Burlesquewrights shake their waggish heads, and vow  
That e'en the best of fairy-pieces now  
Must have red fire the dresses well to show off,  
As fowling pieces without smoke can't go off;  
And find when only aimed to cut a dash,  
The loosest loading makes the brightest flash;  
The aim may wild be, though the object's tame—  
But then as Shakespeare says "What's in an aim!"

Talking of Shakespeare, Avon's bard I mean,  
Whom though all know, so few have rightly seen,  
Not quite so fine as he's of late been *painted*;  
Nor near so bad as sometimes *represented*—  
Well, Shakespeare, who, disdaining tinsel aid,  
In this good city drove a thriving trade,  
(Whether on play or actor it reflects,)  
Becomes a bankrupt now with no *effects*.  
Lest they should be accumulating more dust,  
The boards of Drury Lane are cut—for sawdust;  
And as the stage won't draw itself, perforce is  
Dragged through the mire by a strong team of horses!  
Follow their steps we would not if we could—  
Frankly, in this case, could not if we would.  
And, as Alcestis splendour cannot try at,  
What you enjoy must be all 'on the quiet.'  
No horse will pull *our* play up if it drag,  
No banners when our wit is on the flag,  
No great effects or new imported dance,  
The drooping eye will waken and entrance;  
No fairy land burst wisely on the view,  
To dissipate your mem'ry of who's who;  
But an old story from a classic clime,  
Done for the period into modern rhyme.  
So now you know the worst, and for the rest,  
Alcestis once again will do her best.







Plates on above written

→  
↓  
Apollo's Lyre /  
meas. 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Long Bird /  
Admitted.

Long Pipe /  
Leather apron

Henry McKim, Esq.

Prompt

## ALCESTIS,

THE ORIGINAL STRONG-MINDED WOMAN.

SCENE—*Before the house of Admetus. A modern area practicable L.H. practicable door and steps R. H. Upon the dog-plate in Greek Characters is seen Μρ Αδμητος—and also*  
*‘πλεασε τὸ ῥιγγ θὲ βελλ.*

Enter APOLLO (L.)

APOLLO. Ladies and Gentlemen, I am Apollo—  
Although I frankly own it doesn't follow  
From my costume ; no matter how I'm decked,  
Though not p'raps classical, I'm quite correct.  
The fact is, 'twixt ourselves, I plainly see it is  
All up with us—this age don't care for deities,  
And with our attributes there's no deceiving it.  
My lyre for instance—people don't believe in it.  
The vulgar rabble's wiser than the sages  
Of those delightful green old middle ages.  
Then they respected altars ! ah ! things I trow  
In every respect are altered now !  
My oracles don't get, upon my word,  
A common hearing from the common herd—  
~~Not even a votive kid, much less a nice~~  
“Go in at a tremendous sacrifice.”

Our temples, which were crowned in former day }  
 With leaves of laurel, now they leaves, and say }  
 They won't *give laurel* where they can't *o-bey*. }  
 With votaries the shrine's no longer thronged,  
 And grievously our sacred rites are wronged  
 By men, who, changing all their vows to cursings,  
~~Begin to talk about the "rights of persons."~~  
 If this goes on much longer, for myself, I  
 Must really give up trade, and shut up Delphi.  
 But who comes here? Ah! Orcus, how d'ye do?

*Enter ORCUS, L.H.*

ORCUS. I'm pretty well, and who the deuce are you?

APOLLO. Not know Apollo! have you lost your eyes?

ORCUS. If you're Apollo I apologize.

APOLLO. Well, and what brings you here? for I must say }  
 That Death should walk in the broad face of day }  
 And chat in a familiar off-hand way,  
 Really appears to me an impropriety  
 Which would be scouted in genteel society.

ORCUS. Of what's correct all know Apollo's nice sense,  
 But being Orcus I've a *Awker's* licence.

APOLLO. And what's the object that you have in view?

ORCUS. Well, as a friend, I don't mind telling you—  
 I—I am in love!

APOLLO. You take away my breath!  
 Is love a "ruling passion strong in Death?"  
 And might I venture to enquire her name?  
*Blonde or Brunette?*

ORCUS. Well, *lightish* for a *flame*.

APOLLO. Another? well—opinions differ so—  
 I thought that you had flames enough below.  
 But, pardon me, proceed to revelation  
 Of the fair maid's cognominal appellation—  
 In plainer words, you have forgot her name.

ORCUS. Alcestis.

APOLLO. Not Admetus' wife?

ORCUS. The same.

APOLLO. What, is she due already?

ORCUS. No, not yet;  
 But if she choose to pay her husband's debt

J. Meade.





In *propria personâ*—eh—dy'e see?  
 I'll take her down instead of him with me,  
 Else like a detonator down he goes  
 To pay the *debt o'natur* which he owes!—  
 Don't interrupt—my mind's made up—I've  
     sworn it,  
 And, for the weakness that relents, I scorn it.

APOLLO. Forgive him.

ORCUS. What would of my word be thought then?

APOLLO. You'd *let him off* were't not for the *report* then?

ORCUS. Mind your own business, and leave me to mine,  
 Or, since it seems you can't refrain from prying  
 Where you're not wanted—know, I mean to  
     carry her

To my domains, where, spite of you, I'll marry her!

APOLLO. If you persist in these uncouth expressions  
 I'd not, for something, occupy your hessians.  
 However, we won't quarrel—there's my hand,  
 But, if I can I foil you—understand.

ORCUS. The friendly strife I'm ready to begin,  
 With all my heart, and may the best man win!

SONG—ORCUS.—“*Standard Bearer.*”

Though you appear the model minstrel knight,  
 I'm King of Night, and you won't catch me sleeping;  
 So, interfering with my vested right  
 I'll see if I can't make you pay for peeping!  
 The lady owns to me a higher claim,  
 You shan't redeem for nought the long pledged token—  
 And e'er you put me out, and win my flame,  
 My compact or your head shall first be broken!

*Exeunt severally.*

*Enter ADMETUS, very dejected, from the house; he has a long pipe in his hand, and slowly advances to the front.*

ADMETUS. Oh what a night of mourning I have passed!  
 But, thank the stars, they've disappeared at last.  
 I thought with light my heaviness would cease,  
 Yet the day's *broken* and I find no *peace*.  
 My pipe's my only consolation now,  
 And I will clear my pipes and tell you how.

SONG. ~~ADMETUS.~~ AIR.—“*Billy Nutts the Poet.*”

On all hands be this truth allowed,  
 Experience must show one  
 When life's o'ershadowed by a cloud,  
 The only ways to *blow* one!  
 It has been my cure, if other folk  
 Would only deign to try it,  
 The cares of life would end in smoke,  
 Let him, who can, deny it.  
 Of pain they take a *bird's eye* view,  
 Of grief feel no *returns*, sirs,  
 For Care not care a single *screw*,  
 And disappointment spurn, sirs!  
 With every ill the effect's the same,  
 Whatever cause may rack ye—  
 The widower might his *weeds* disclaim  
 And sing out ‘*I O Backy!*’  
 Then on all hands, &c.

Some with the juicy grape their cares bid go forth,  
 And sing “Fill up the sparkling bowl,” and so forth  
 But e'en that fails to chase my fears away—  
 The die is cast, and I must die to day!  
 I can't pretend—and he's a fool who would—  
 Bear death at forty-two with fortitu-de;  
 Yet I am in for it, I must confess,  
 With no great chance of getting out, unless  
 Some friend were here to serve me with his wit.

*Enter ORCUS, L.*

ORCUS. I, as your friend, can serve you—with this writ;  
 Nay, don't be frightened—It is only I—  
 Your little bill, Sir, of mortality. (*presenting it*)

ADME. Oh, curse it!

ORCUS. Spare your curses, my young spark

ADME. I merely made a cursory remark. (*looking at bill*)

ORCUS. Ah! look at it. I fancy e'en your skill  
 Can't find a flaw there.

ADME. To your little bill  
 I am no stranger, though I never *meet* it.

ORCUS. It has been long standing.

ADME. Standing? pray *re-seat* it







Or if you think such proposition strange,  
We'll let it *run* a little for a change.

ORCUS. It's very well to talk, but these facetiæ,  
However specious, won't supply the specie—  
*I'm* no great talker, so with me to sup  
You must stump down, Sir, if you can't *stump up*.  
(ADMETUS *kneels to* ORCUS, *who repulses him*)

SONG—ORCUS. AIR—"Woodman, spare that tree."

My good man, spare thy knee,  
Make not one single bow,  
Thy youth won't shelter thee,  
I mean to have you now!  
I've a conveyance here at hand,  
To take you from this spot—  
My good man, you'd better stand,  
Your *axe-ings* touch me not!

*Enter ALCESTIS, from the house, she advances majestically down the stage, and stands between them.*

ALCES. Hey! Hoity, toity, what on earth's the matter?  
That in the public street you make a clatter?  
(*to* ADMETUS) Explain, what means this? How  
the ninny quakes!

Till now I always thought him "no great shakes."

ADME. Why, I've discovered in our empty till  
A disability to pay his bill;  
Can't settle the account, and so you see  
Must go to the account which settles me.

ORCUS. (*aside*) Sylph-like in form, a goddess, too, in feature,  
To sum up all—she's a stupendous creature!  
To curb my rising love I idly tries,  
I eyes the idol that I idolize!

ALCES. (*to* ORCUS) Good Mr. Death, find something  
else to do,

Than suing one who is not worth a *sou*.

ADME. At least a moment suffer me to lag,  
'To cram a few things in a carpet-bag. (ORCUS  
*signifies no*)

A hair and tooth brush in a *sac-du-nuit*.

ORCUS. I'm very sorry, but it cannot be;

Such things you'll find no use for, though you  
may, Sir,

When sunk so low be glad, p'rhaps, of a *raiser*.

ADME. My plaintive tears your hands bedew, you see.

ORCUS. You may be-dew, indeed are due to me  
And so a-dieu to life.

ADME.

Yet hear me.

ORCUS.

Nay;

I want no prayers, I only claim my prey.

You've but one chance—a poor one—can you find

A greater fool than you are, who's inclined

To take your place, and in your stead to go?

I'll wait for you another year or so.

ADME. You're very good—I've tried it on, but most<sup>d</sup> of  
My friends don't seem disposed to be disposed of  
At such a sacrifice; my father e'en,

Though in a green old age, was not so green,  
But instantly the proposition flouted—

And mother didn't seem to care about it.

How true, that when misfortunes overtake us,

The whole "Society of Friends" are *Quakers*!

ORCUS. Yet why thus the inevitable step shun?

I'll promise you below a warm reception!

ADME. Yes, but your warmth I fear's all of the wrong  
sort.

(to ALCESTIS) Have you no *voice*, dear, for your  
*mourning consort*?

ALCES. What can I urge? yet stay, I've half a mind

To do the heroine! (to ORCUS) Suppose I were  
inclined

To close with you?

ORCUS.

I've no time for supposing,

I am an advocate for "early closing."

ALCES. Well, since *he* hasn't pluck then to go through it,

My mind's made up! never say die—I'll do it!

ORCUS. You'll take his place? that's odd!

ALCES.

'Tis *even* so.

ADME. I'm stupified!

ALCES.

You hadn't far to go.

ORCUS. Well, I embrace your offer.

ADME. (to ALCESTIS)

And I you!

My tears resolve themselves into *a-dieu*.



2  
Polay. Stoff?  
Cape

Phœdra  
Sony Broome

Alcestis, love, I cannot find the heart  
With one so captivating e'er to part!

ALCES. I may be captivating, but Death, stronger,  
Will not be *kept-a-vaunting* any longer.

ADME. Go, then, and better to indulge my grief,  
I'll fetch another pocket handkerchief.

*Exit ADMETUS into the house.*

ORCUS. (to ALCESTIS) You're ready?

ALCES. How are we to go, old chap?

ORCUS. Oh! never fear, I'll drive you in my *trap*.

ALCES. I must go packing down *your* trap, and so  
You'll let me pack up *my* traps ere I go?  
And grant me a few minutes, I beseech,  
For the delivery of my maiden speech—  
'Tis usual.

ORCUS. I'll give you in that case,  
If it is *meet*, say half-an hour's *grace*.

*Exit ORCUS, L. H.*

ALCES. 'Tis done! the very ferry boat I see,  
And Charon, who's to take such care on me.  
E'en now in fancy I'm across the Styx;  
And now I'm nothing; literally *Nick's*!

SONG—ALCESTIS. AIR.—“*The Waterman.*”

For of course you have heard of that jolly old waterman,  
Who over Styx is accustomed to ply:  
He feathers his oars with much skill and dexterity,  
Rowing the parties who're going to die:  
He looks out so sharp, and he reckons so steadily,  
That none can escape, go they ne'er so unready,  
And he eyes all us gals with so greedy an air,  
That this waterman ne'er gives a chance to a *fair*.

SONG—ALCESTIS. AIR.—“*Nix my Dolly.*”

In the boat by a strong tug I am borne,  
There a premature widow I sit forlorn.

(to Orchestra) Scrape away!

My noble husband the live-long day,  
Will have nothing to do but cut capers gay,  
While Nick my body will take away,  
Nick my body will take away.



But I don't so much care, for some fine day,  
Folks will dub me a heroine, I dare say—

In a play.

And I as a martyr shall chronicled be,  
The heroine great of some trage-dee;

So Nick my body may take away.

Nick my body may take away.

*Exit ALCESTIS into the house.*

POLAX (*is heard outside, L.H.*) Move on, there! don't stand blocking up the street!

*Enters L.H., he is habited in a classic dress, with the exception of his hat, cape, and staff, which are those of a modern policeman.*

I've ventured a few yards beyond my beat!

The fact is, that I can't withstand the looks  
Of Phœdra, handsomest of all *plain* cooks.

Romeo's soliloquy to slightly vary—

I do remember an approximate arey,

And thereabouts she dwells, a thrifty elf,

On seven pounds a year, and finds herself

In tea and sugar, from which fact I'm led

To fear my Phœdra isn't over-fed.

~~In her small kitchen dries a reindeer's tongue!~~

~~Suspended from a hook, and by it hung~~

~~Are other ill-made dishes, on the drawers, Sirs,~~

~~A beggarly account of cups and saucers,~~

~~With earthen pots and pans, while in the dresser~~

~~She keeps the love-letters I write her—bless her!~~

~~Remnants of finery—a half-knitted cuff~~

~~And that peculiar substance, kitchen sink,~~

~~Composed of candle ends—indeed, whate'er~~

The family inconveniently can't spare.

Her Sunday bonnet, too, although I doubt

She doesn't often get a Sunday out!

SONG.—POLAX. AIR—"Rumpti Bumpti."

I'm monarch of all I survey,

My will there is none dare dispute,

From street organ and image boy's tray,

To the bag-pipes and cracked German Flute.





If apple-woman dare me to annoy,  
 Vending oranges, apples, or pears,  
 There is nothing I so much enjoy,  
 As to pop on her wares—unawares !  
 Although I object to street fights,  
 And vote burglary rather a bore,  
 On a boy half my size I delights  
 To exert the strong arm of the law—  
 For I'm monarch, &c.

And, if I don't mistake, the house is here ;  
 At any rate, I'll try it (*calls*) Phœdra, dear !

(PHÆDRA appears at the area gate, opens it, and comes down)

PHÆDRA. Who calls so loud ?

POLAX. One who's allowed to call.

PHÆDRA. Why make a rout, then, when you give a bawl ?

POLAX. Phœdra, I have observed of late, with pain,  
 Your constant swaying from your constant swain.  
 The arrival of a rival here I spy—  
 You've cut your old *beau* for some *a-newer-tie*,  
 So slight my hand—I see—I understand.

PHÆDRA. Of course a *Seer* is up to *slight of hand*.

POLAX. Now, though I do not wish to be censorious—

PHÆDRA. What ? You are jealous—are you ? This is  
 glorious !

POLAX. I don't half like those Sunday evening walks—

PHÆDRA. But you can't think how prettily he talks !

POLAX. Flattery's his profession—I see through it—  
 He's bred to butter, and of course he'll do it.  
 A cook should be a cook, not a coquette.

PHÆDRA. Don't intend to give it up though yet.

SONG.—PHÆDRA. AIR—"I'm afloat."

I'm a flirt, I'm a flirt, yet on thirty's bright side,  
 And numbers have offered to make me their bride ;  
 Yet, though suitors don't flag in attention to me,  
 I'm a flirt, I'm a flirt, and my hand is yet free !  
 I turn up my nose at the gent and young lord,  
 Though by their attentions I'm constantly bored ;  
 And ne'er as a wife at the altar I'll kneel,  
 While my eyes carry fire, and my heart remains steel !  
 In all that I do, I consult my own mind,  
 And I warrant I leave all the slow girls behind ;

For, though puppies don't flag, no, nor waver you see,  
I'm a flirt, I'm a flirt, and my hand yet is free!

But since you take to schooling others, pray, Sir,  
What has detained you such a time away, Sir?  
I haven't seen you for a week.

POLAX. ~~So long?~~

Come—not a week—that's coming it too strong.

~~But by yon anything you please I vow—~~

PHÆDRA. Your vows have not the slightest weight, Sir, now;  
A pretty state your pretty protestations  
Have brought me to—with such acts I've no  
patience.

The fire you kindled in my breast forsaking,  
You've put out—

POLAX. How?

PHÆDRA. Like other fires—by raking.

POLAX. Nay, you mistake, naught can my ardour change.

PHÆDRA. Such fire comes not within my kitchen range  
Of intellect, so best at once we part.

POLAX. Nay, let me follow suit dear to your heart.

PHÆDRA. But I prefer another—therefore, Sir,  
~~I must discard the suit which you prefer,~~  
~~Who are a shuffler and a double dealer.~~  
~~So shuffle off and out!~~

POLAX. (*kneeling*) My heart's dear stealer,  
Hear the appeal of an appealing 'Peeler.'

PHÆDRA. Nonsense! your useless courtship better cease,  
man.

POLAX. Be not a 'crusher' to your fond policeman!  
See, here I kneel, the picture of despair!

PHÆDRA. Picture by *Constable*, extremely rare!

POLAX. ~~Nay, cruel Phœdra, hear me, do you choose~~  
~~My head should illustrate some Grecian noose?~~  
~~Yes, yes, since you of pity know no sense,~~  
Better at once be hanged than in suspense:  
A cord will sweetly end my mind's distraction.

PHÆDRA. In legal phrase, '*a cord* and satisfaction.'

POLAX. But hearken, my death at your door I'll lay!

PHÆDRA. Then in the morning 'twill be swept away.

POLAX. And can you laugh? I'll stab myself, and go  
A groaning ghost down to the shades below!



3  
R. C. C. C.  
L. C. C. C.



PHÆDRA. Poor ghost ! you'll stab yourself, and be, of course,  
In-*spectre* of the *stab-you-lary* force.

POLAX. Look kindly on me—I'll be evermore—  
Your constant swain—

PHÆDRA. You'd be a constant bore.

POLAX. But to be plain with you—

PHÆDRA. That's no great feat,  
You must be *plain* with every one you meet.

POLAX. Oh ! look not on my form with too much rigour,  
In buying good stuff never mind the figure !  
Nay, hear my suit—

PHÆDRA. Each word your chance, Sir, lessens.  
What ? try a suit on in a lady's presence !

POLAX. Why this rough treatment at your hands ?

PHÆDRA. Oh—stuff—  
'Tis the *chaps* like you on them that makes them  
rough !

POLAX. Why, Phædra, because once I chance to fail,  
*Jump* at conclusions, take offence and rail !

PHÆDRA. (*giving her hand*) Well, there ! that I was hasty,  
I confess.

POLAX. And you will yet be Mrs. Polax ?

PHÆDRA. Yes.

POLAX. O happiness ! alas ! harsh duty tears  
Me from thee to my rounds upon the Squares ;  
Yet, one kiss on that cheek before I quit.

PHÆDRA. I wonder you've the cheek to ask for it !

POLAX. 'Tis but to sign our bargain.

PHÆDRA. Sign it ? Pooh !  
I'll put my hand to it, if that will do.

(*offers to slap his face*)

POLAX. You'll make your mark, you mean ? No ; when you  
write,

The down strokes of your round hand are not light :  
The impression you have made's enough i'facks  
Without the impression of your sealing whacks.

PHÆDRA. There then. (*he kisses her*)

POLAX. If e'er were day of rapture this is !  
So now I'm off.

PHÆDRA. Oh ! goodness gracious, missis !

POLAR *pretends to be addressing some one off*, L.

POLAR. Move on, young fellow! I'm a looking at you—  
You've been at that some time—don't let me catch you!

*Exit POLAR, L.*

(ALCESTIS *has appeared at the top of the door steps, leading*  
*TWO CHILDREN, and comes down*)

ALCES. Phœdra, inform me truly, if you can,

Who is that very fast and loose young man?

PHŒDRA. (*hesitating*) Why, if you please, that's—

ALCES. No prevarication

PHŒDRA. My cousin.

ALCES. That's a very old *relation*.

Don't think with cousins though to cozen me.

PHŒDRA. Then, he's my husband, please, as is to be,  
A young policeman—

ALCES. Then my scoldings cease,

All petticoats are caught by the *pelisse*.

Now go in-doors, I'm going to speak, you see,  
The regular classical soliloquy.

*Exit PHŒDRA into the house.*

(ALCESTIS *advances with the two children*)!

Oh! sun, and moon, and stars! oh, day and night!

Oh every thing ~~above an inch in height!~~

Oh Day! as black as black of Day and Martin,  
To what infernal realms must I be starting!

~~Oh bed!—beg pardon—nuptial couch, I mean,~~

~~'Twere green, though, to regret now Gretna Green.~~

~~Else might I ask, were not the question idle,~~

~~Why was I ever saddled with this bridal?~~

~~Or why—but these, alas, are *whys* too late—~~

~~Did I with such a milksop link my fate!~~

~~Why at the altar did we join our hands?~~

~~Why Hymen e'er unite us in his bands?~~

~~Those *bands* which ne'er have played the, *heavy waits*,  
*A-merry-key* in our *united states*?~~

Why was my heart to be with such a spoony un,  
A wretched picture of a poor *heart* union?

For life with him was nothing but a curse,

And though I took him 'for better or for worse,'

The world can't surely wonder I forsook him, for

I found him such a deal worse than I took him for.

Oh, parent hearth! oh, earth, air, fire, and water!

Oh, son in petticoats and unmarried daughter!

—

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151000.



51

Hercules / Club!

What's to become of you when my sun sets,  
~~Props of my house—I may say, *par-a-pets*?~~  
 They say that beauty's but a snare, if true,  
 They'll be *caught in* it who are *courting* you;  
~~But rather may your grace, bewitching *naïveté*,~~  
 And noble *carriage* be a *handsome's* *safely*.\*

My Eumelus, too, who is to insert  
 The missing button in his baby shirt  
 When I am gone? or who supply the stitches  
 That may be wanting in his infant—trousers?  
 And when in youth his jacket he outwears,  
 And sows his wild oats, who's to *sow* his *tares*?

And is't for this I've led the virtuous life  
 Of tender mother and affectionate wife?  
 And I should add—obedient daughter, too;  
 But that I might, in a strict point of view,  
 Account myself an *orphan*, for so *seldom*  
 My parents were apparent till hell held 'em,  
 (Forgive the monosyllable, sweet ladies,  
 I meant but Tartarus, or the classic Hades)  
 That I'd no time to aggravate Mama,  
 Or make my Pa my foe by a *faux pas*!

I might, if I had space, expatiate—  
 Alas! though, I've no room to ruminate,  
 Still less, as I die early, to di-late!

So I have done—another observation  
 Would be entire supererogation.

My life, 'tis clear, no words of mine can save,  
 And I must pass at once from 'gay to *grave*!  
 That bourne from which each traveller born soon learns  
 T' expect 'small profits and no quick returns.'  
 I must descend; egad! I can't help thinking  
 E'en now I 'gin to feel a sort of sinking;  
 I'll show them though how well real good stuff *dies*—  
 No woman's tears shall dim my closing eyes,  
 I'll not e'en *hit off* 'one of my own *sighs*.'

*Enter ORCUS, L. H.*

ORCUS. Be quick and die.

ALCESTIS. Why, don't you know, you dunce,  
 Nobody can be *quick* and dead at once?

ORCUS. You're humming me, or must excuse my humming  
 The popular words, 'You are a good time coming.'

## DUET—ALCESTIS and ORCUS.

AIR—"My skiff is on the shore."

ORCUS. My trap is in the floor,  
 And waiting for thee :  
 I can't allow no more,  
 You must travel with me ;  
 And as we're sinking down my song shall be  
 My dearest Alcestis, I love but thee !

ALCESTIS. Yes, I fear you're got me now—  
 You're got me now—you're got me now,  
 So I don't intend to make a row,  
 But must reconciled be.

BOTH. Your }  
 My } trap is in the floor,

And waiting for { me,  
 { thee,

You won't }  
 I can't } allow no more,

I }  
 You } must travel with { thee ;  
 { me,

And as we're sinking down { your } song shall be  
 { my }

ALCESTIS. { Whatever you please, for it's nothing to me !

ORCUS. { My dearest Alcestis, I love but thee !

*They have been standing upon trap c. during the above, and gradually descending—they sink.*

*Enter ADMETUS from the house.*

ADME. Woe ! woe ! in vain I weep, my tears will flow,  
 And I can't stop these *coursers* with my *woe*.  
 She was a pattern to her sex, I doubt  
 Ere this the Styx has washed the pattern out !  
 Her laugh, so merry in the days of yore,  
 Will never echo through the building more ;  
 That airy footfall hushed will plainly tell  
 How death from me has *wrung my airy belle*  
 And, dull as is a rainy Vauxhall fete,  
 My fate will now become, I calculate ;  
 But I'm prepared, do with me as you will, Fate,  
 Vauxhall is nothing to my *Rush-of-ill-fate* !  
 Ah ! who comes here ? not Hercules, sure, is it ?

to X X  
Pring for traps

Report of Dec 11 part

φ Μαρία Νυνε.  
2. Πορτ.

φ. Νυνε & γαμ  
, 2 Πορτ.



*Enter* HERCULES, L.H.

HERCULES. I've just dropped in to pay a flying visit :  
 My leave of absence lasts but a few days,  
 And I've no time for any *waste* in *stays*.  
 In fact, I'm going to astound the neighbours,  
 By the recital of my dozen labours.

SONG—HERCULES. AIR—"Paddy Miles."

I am Hercules, famed for my deeds and my labours,  
 With honours a trump turning up at a *rub*,  
 For slaying my foes and assisting my neighbours  
 By the aid of this "Juvenile Travellers' Club!"  
 Although I'm apprenticed to one called Eurystheus,  
 And bound to perform whatsoever he sets;  
 Yet he finds all his dodges are not of the least use,  
 For his driest of tasks but my appetite whets!  
 When first in my cradle and counted a suckling,  
 Two snakes tied around me their "*Knottin' 'em Twist*;"  
 But I twisted their necks like a pair of young ducklings,  
 And arrested their strength by the strength of my wrist.  
 A friend had a nice little property formerly,  
 But a *lion* upon it there happened to be :  
*Straight* I followed my *bent*, though that seems an anomaly,  
 And hid the lion whose hide now hides me!

The stag of Diana I hunted a long while,  
 O'er mountains, hills, valleys, plains, rivers, and rocks;  
 His long running account I soon balanced in strong style,  
 For I staggered the stag, and unsettled his stocks!  
 For Augeas that *stable* improvement I wrought too,  
 That to modernized Smithfield I fain would apply,  
 But—the rest of my labours old Ovid has taught you,  
 And Lempriere's Classical Dictiona-ry!

ADME. (*aside*) I must dissemble. (*aloud*) Sir, you haven't  
 dined.

HERC. I'll pick a bit with you—you're very kind.  
 But how is this, Admetus, my frivolity  
 You don't receive with your accustomed jollity.

ADME. Well, since you must know all, this day my wife  
 Was by a rough artist taken from the life;

'Twas Death, and the original is his.

HERC. I see the *illustration* by your *phiz* ;  
But since I know of this, my friend, for grub  
I'll not annoy you, but dine at my *club*.

ADME. Excuse me, I won't hear of your departure,  
To friendship I prefer to be a martyr ;  
So you shall stay, we'll make you up a bed.

HERC. You're very good ; and is she really dead ?

ADME. Extremely so.

HERC. Since such, then, is the fact,  
Tell us, Admetus, how d'ye mean to act ?

ADME. I'm at my wits' ends.

HERC. (*aside*) I dare say you are.  
That little territory don't go far.  
But don't be shut up, what is to be done, man ?

ADME. I'll be *shut up*, and in my *man-sion shun man* !  
Yes, live on bread and water for a year,  
Discourse with no one, nobody shall dare .  
To offer the most trivial observation,  
Or volunteer a word of consolation ;  
I'll taste no wine till on my bier I'm stretched.  
And every one about me shall be wretched !  
Or, if o' the water course, I e'er repent me,  
—Like Ariel. "I'll do my *spiriting* gently ;"  
My pipe's bowled out, her death, 'tis only proper,  
Should operate as my tobacco stopper.  
But if you like a cigar—

HERC. Not I, indeed, as  
It would be wrong to smoke a widower's weeds.  
Amiable mourner ! it is quite appalling  
To see a rising chap like you so chap-fallen ;  
So I'll appease my hunger with a snack,  
As you proposed, then start off in a crack,  
And do my best to bring Alcestis back !

SONG—HERCULES. AIR—" *Cavalier*."

Like a dutiful knight,  
I'll set off honour bright,  
When my hunger and thirst I have stayed ;  
And this gay devil here,  
Very small shall appear,  
As the lady I seek, Sir, and aid !



6  
Pigeon

For I'll soon let him know  
 'Tis a word and a blow,  
 Or two blows and no word with me;  
 And I ne'er will give o'er,  
 Till old Orcus I floor,  
 And have made Alcestis free!

If he entertain thought  
 Which he didn't to ought,  
 And not at all becoming his age,  
 I'll engage, never fear,  
 He'll give up such idea,  
 And his *passion* will yield to my *rage*!  
 So, wiser by far,  
 You'll light up a cigar  
 And go home—leave the matter to me.  
 To the lady I slopes,  
 Soon to lead her, I hopes,  
 And restore her ere long to thee!

ADME. You're very kind, but the attempt is vain,  
 She is a loss I ne'er shall see a-gaiu.

HERC. Don't be too sure of that, I yet may save her;  
 I first shall put it to him as a favour;  
 Should he refuse her restoration hither,  
 I must oblige him to oblige me with her.

ADME. You cannot mean—

HERC. That I must Orcus drub.  
 And from my strong hand play my winning *club*;  
 I'll polish him, I warrant.

ADME. What? in fight?

HERC. In fight? how else? d'ye think those noodles right,  
 Who with a sanctimonious visage go forth  
 To preach the polished arts of Peace, and so forth?  
 To me such notions are entirely foreign;  
 Polish of Peace! for *polish* I try "*Warring*."  
 So now I'm off, I'll not be long away,  
 "My soul's in arms," et cetera—good day!

*Exit HERCULES into the house.*

SONG—ADMETUS. AIR—"Jolly Nose."

Goodness knows what I suffer to think of the grip  
 That old Orcus has laid on my deary:



Though for doing as she did and missing my lip,  
I'm, I calculate, rather too leary !

Goodness knows when I look at myself in the glass,  
I am struck with the sad recollection  
Of how plump I was once—now, I'm brought to a pass  
Of thinness which won't bear *reflection* !

When I think of my lass I all comfort refuse,  
And repudiate all consolation—  
I'm a prey to the most undeniable blues,  
And the wretchedest dog in creation !

Some say she was easy put out, but I'm quite  
Sure the blockheads knew nothing about her ;  
Now, she's *put out*, and with her has put out *de-light*,  
For I live but in darkness without her !

*Within* the house I must bewail my bride,  
For such deep sighs as mine can't be *out-sighed*.

*Enter PHÆDRA angrily, from the house.*

How dare you, Phœdra, rudely thus intrude  
Upon the widowed mourner's solitude ?  
Peace and begone !

PHÆDRA. No peace, Sir, you will find,  
Until you've heard a small piece of my mind  
I've lived with you, when Monday next appears,  
As maid of all work and no play, three years ;  
And, though my saying it may p'rhaps seem funny,  
You wouldn't find a better at the money ;  
I've served in many families, but must say  
Never was served as I have been to-day—  
And if it is repeated, some fine morning  
Give you fair warning, I shall give you warning !

ADME. This everlasting rattle, prythee, cease,  
And tell us calmly what's the matter, please.

PHÆDRA. Oh ! it's that friend of yours, that Hercules,  
That warrior in *undress* uniform,  
Since he came in has done nothing else but storm ;  
Not only walks into our house and stops,  
But also walks into our mutton chops,  
With such a *twist* as gave me quite a *turn*.



7

Very Busy

for you  
last issue

Pharm. - I was the  
Don in his face.

ADME. But what's your special grievance?

PHÆDRA. You shall learn

First, he informs me that the meat is spoiled,

Then finds the vegetables overboiled;

'Service is no inheritance,' then where's

The use of giving us poor servants *airs*?

ADME. He seems to make no bones.

PHÆDRA. No bones? The glutton

Has nothing made *but* bones of our cold mutton!

If he comes here for supper, I'll grow bolder

And show him—

ADME. That's right—show him the *cold shoulder*.

PHÆDRA. And I must add, after a loss so recent

Such conduct is especially indecent!

ADME. Nay, he's our friend at bottom.

PHÆDRA. Then, would he

Were our friend at the bottom of the sea.

However, he is gone, and there's an end on't,

But if he comes again, I go, depend on't.

DUET.—AIR—" *Tow, row, row.*"

That I'm a menial I'm aware, Sir.

And with such term must e'en live branded,

But, if you go too far, prepare, Sir,

For a blow up, for I won't stand it.

ADME. Phædra, now—don't make a row,

Why put yourself out of humour?

Don't, dear, now!

PHÆDRA. It's little I get in shape of wages,

And with such as it is, I'm quite contented;

But whoever puts upon me I engages

Great or small he shall repent it!

ADME. Phædra, now—don't make a row,

Why put yourself out of humour?

Don't, dear, now!

(*Voices are heard outside in altercation, then enter HERCULES with ALCESTIS veiled, ORCUS following, L. H.*)

ORCUS. Well, there, I give her up, then, since it seems

You must be thwarting all my little schemes.

HERC. Admetus, do you know this lady veiled?

ADME. With hope and fear at once I am assailed :  
It must be she, and yet I own it's puzzling  
Her features to distinguish through the *muslin* ;  
Pluck off that envious veil, nay, wherefore pause  
'It is the *gauze*, my soul, it is the *gauze*'  
Must plead excuse for me, the only test is,  
Thus to remove it—yes, it is Alcestis !

(*he removes the veil—ALCESTIS faints*)

With sudden joy her senses have gone from her,  
Who'll put a *full stop* to this fearful *coma* ?  
Is it a swoon, or nothing but a feint ?  
Alas ! I fear she's dead !

ALCESTIS (*recovering*)                      You're wrong, I aint.

ADME. Ah ! she revives ! (*to HERCULES*) and did you win  
her ?

ALCES.    Pooh !

Of course I'm *won*, and now I'm coming *to*.

(*PHÆDRA has fetched the CHILDREN from the house; ALCESTIS  
embraces her and them*)

ALCES. My own dear Phœdra ! and my blessed children !  
This sudden happiness is quite bewildering !

ORCUS. It's very well for you, but I've been treated  
Most shamefully indeed, I may say cheated.

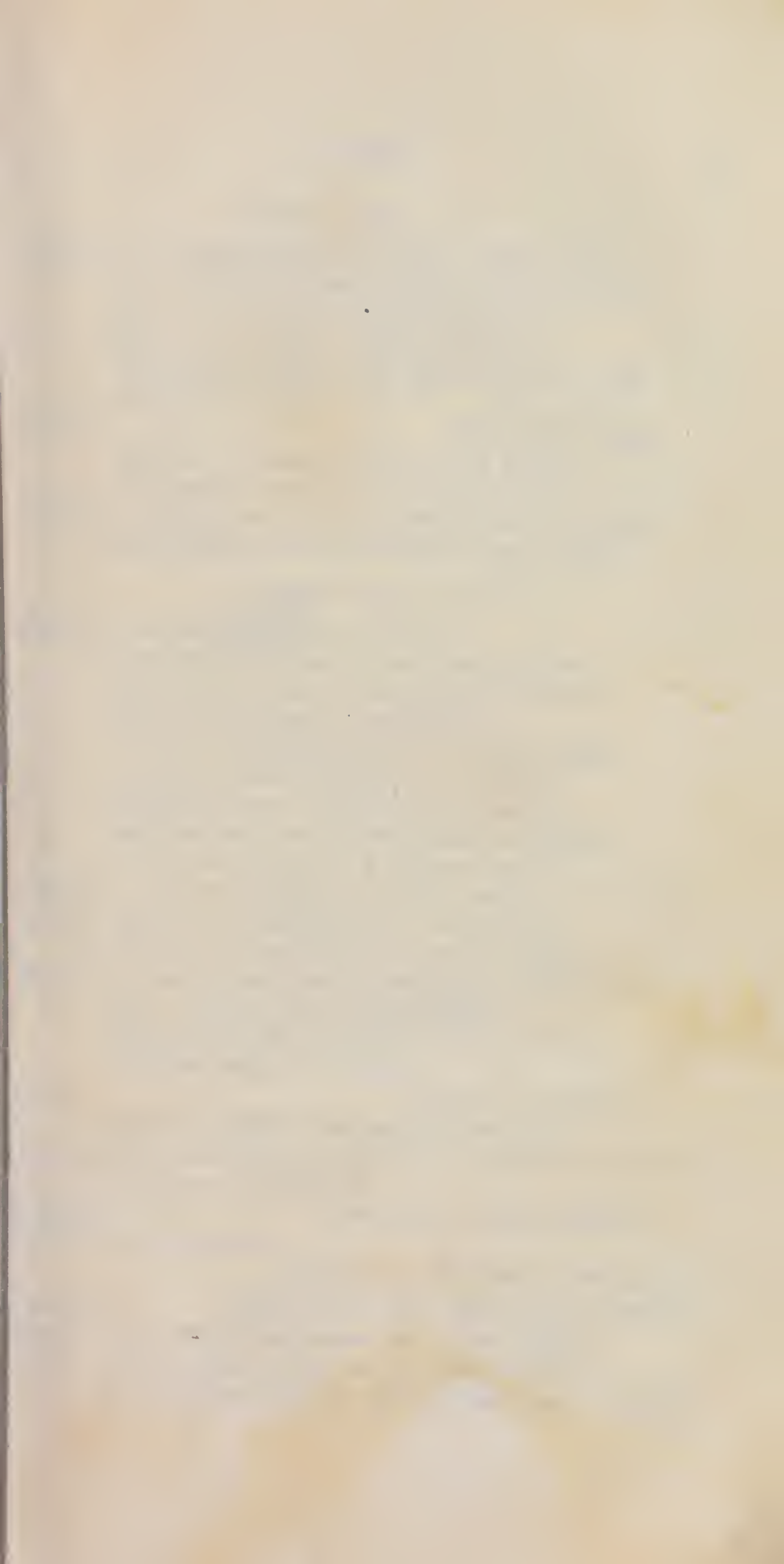
HERC. Well, if you feel aggrieved at this my action,  
I'll give you every sort of satisfaction—  
Pistol, sword, single stick—though there are few  
Who'd like to cross the single Styx with you.  
You know where I am to be found ?

ORCUS.    Why, yes,  
I at your club soon found out your address.

(*rubbing himself*)

No ! No ! of kicks and cuffs I've had my fill,  
You are a knight—" *knocks et præterea nil*,"  
Indeed, they are so terrible, an error  
'Twere scarce to call you son of *Nox* and *Terra*.  
Besides, I know, in spite of all that's passed,  
They're pretty sure to come to me at last !







*Enter APOLLO, R. H.*

APOLLO. I've just looked in in time to wish you joy,  
 Why, Orcus, you don't look as well, old boy,  
 As when we parted, scarce an hour ago!  
 But, not to further snub a fallen foe,  
 There is my hand, you'll take it in good part,  
 And let our quarrel drop?

ORCUS. With all my heart.  
 And now you must excuse me if I go,  
 I've urgent business in the shades below.

APOLLO. Well, if you must, farewell! and for myself, I  
 Am going to my own *shades*, those *at-Delphi*.

*Enter POLAX, L. H.*

POLAX. I fear to enter or to interfere  
 In so much happiness, but Phœdra, dear,  
 You'll pardon me in venturing to express,  
 With due apology for suddenness,  
 A hope, since things are in this happy state,  
 You'll not with me decline to conjugate  
 Phœdra, do but consent to be my wife,  
 And hear my plan of happiness through life.  
 So we'll to all a pair of patterns jog!

PHŒDRA. A *pair of patterns*? what? when one's a *clog*?

ALCES. A truce to *badinage*, for, to say sooth,  
 Whatever's bad-in-age is worse in youth.

PHŒDRA. I must take time to think on't, I don't know—  
 But a proposal does come *apropos*.  
 To-morrow you I'll with an answer favour,  
 Till then must waive reply.

POLAX. Nay, it were safer  
 To *seal* it with a kiss, and not a *waiver*.

ALCES. Come, kiss him, Phœdra, why a grievance make it?  
 You know you like it!

PHŒDRA. Well, then, he may take it.

POLAX. That's better.

*(kisses her—she gently boxes his ears)*

PHŒDRA. Mind, Sir, I said “take,” not “snatch!”

POLAX. Your *tinder-box* assures me we're a *match*.

ALCES. That's settled, then, and as delays I hate,  
 The marriage contract shall be drawn up straight.

ADME. Yes, that's all very well, but you'll admit  
We must get these kind friends to *witness* it;  
The document is valueless, of course,  
Unless it bear the seal of their applause.

ALCES. (*to audience*) Our story's finished, and our trouble  
ends here;

But should the approbation of our friends here  
Nerve us to re-enact our fancied sorrow,  
We'll but adjourn it till this time to-morrow!

FINALE.—AIR—"Rosin the Beau."

ALCES. We have come to a happy conclusion—  
A happy conclusion? who knows!  
Kind friends, don't destroy the illusion  
But let all be *couleur de rose*!

ORCUS. I've been most disgustingly treated—cheated,  
Most shamefully shamelessly used!  
But I'm ready to have it repeated  
If by it you'll say your amused!

ADME. If you think that our drama is *naked*,  
You'll rejoice that its' brought to its' *close*;  
But we trust you won't so far forsake it  
For the sake of Alcestis repose!

ALCES. Look benignly on our trepidation  
Now our drama is brought to a close,  
When we ask for your kind approbation  
Let your 'ayes' be far over your "noes!"

CHORUS.—Let your ayes, &c.

B. APOLLO. POL. PHÆD. ALC. ADM. HERC. ORCUS. L.

CURTAIN.

King







